

Ways sought to ease housing shortfalls: Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Government will continue to seek ways and means to overcome the many shortfalls in the housing industry and ease the housing shortage problem in the country. The Deputy Prime Minister said, however, there

was no guarantee that the problems besieging the housing industry would be removed entirely.

"I am most dissatisfied with the situation and I think the problems will not be solved even until the year 2000," he told reporters at the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) here.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is also the Trade and Industry Minister, was earlier shown a model do-it-

yourself house costing \$2,000 designed by the University's Architecture Faculty.

The one-roomed house is constructed out of hollow bricks.

He said the housing problem in the country hinged on the question of supply and demand and the Government could not guarantee that, in the implementation of its housing policy, there would not be any shortfalls.

He also stressed on the

need for Malaysians to change their attitudes towards housing innovations and be ready to accept changes. This reorientation of attitudes could partly solve the housing problem, he added.

For instance, he said, the cheap do-it-yourself house designed by UTM was suitable for the rural areas but the question was whether the rural people were willing to accept them as dwellings.

"Rural folks prefer houses on stilts," he said, and added that it would not be right if such houses were constructed in the urban areas where the cost of the land was very much higher.

"It will be out of proportion for a \$2,000 house be built on a piece of land costing say \$40,000," he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister, who was visibly impressed by the UTM do-it-yourself house, said he was keeping an open mind about it.

He said the Government was ready to accept the concept of the cheap house if UTM could prove that such houses would help to solve housing problems in the country.

"UTM has to carry out deeper studies, particularly with regard to the possibility of reducing further its costs and simplifying its construction method," he said.

On timber houses, he said such houses were no longer suitable from the view point of costs and availability of the material.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir later attended a close-door briefing by UTM's Vice-Chancellor Tan Sri Ainuddin Wahid.